

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00

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FM AMEMBASSY WARSAW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4602

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW POUCH

AMCONSUL KRAKOW POUCH

AMCONSUL POZNAN POUCH

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT SHUM PL

SUBJ: OPENING OF AUSCHWITZ EXHIBITION DEDICATED TO JEWISH
VICTIMS OF NAZI PERSECUTION

1. A NEW PERMANENT EXHIBITION, "THE MARTYRDOM AND STRUGGLE OF
JEWS IN EUROPE 1933 - 1945", OPENED AT THE STATE MUSEUM OT
OSWIECIM (AUSCHWITZ) ON APRIL 17. REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE POLISH
FRONT OF NATIONAL UNITY, THE COUNCIL FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
MONUMENTS TO STRUGGLE AND MARTYRDOM, THE MAIN BOARD OF THE UNION
OF FIGHTERS FOR FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY (ZBOWID -- THE POLISH VET-
ERANS ORGANIZATION), THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE AND ART, AND THE
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SOCIO-CULTURAL SOCIETY OF JEWS IN POLAND WERE PRESENT. IN ADDI-
TION, FOREIGN DELEGATIONS, INCLUDING REPRESENTATIONS FROM THE
INTERNATIONAL AUSCHWITZ COMMITTEE AND THE WORLD CONGRESS OF JEWS,
ATTENDED THE OPENING. THE PRESENCE OF A 30-MEMBER DELEGATION
FROM ISRAEL, REPORTED BY A PARTICIPANT FROM CANADA, WAS NOT
MENTIONED IN THE POLISH PRESS.

2. ACCORDING TO THE POLISH PARTY DAILY TRYBUNA LUDU OF APRIL 18, THE MAIN SPEAKERS AT THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION WERE JANUSZ WIECZOREK, CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PRESERVATION OF MONUMENTS TO STRUGGLE AND MARTYRDOM, NAHUM GOLDMANN, HONORARY CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD CONGRESS OF JEWS, AND STEFAN GRAJEK, CHAIRMAN OF THE WORLD ORGANIZATION OF JEWISH FIGHTERS, PARTISANS, AND CAMP INMATES. WIECZOREK SAID, AMONG OTHER THINGS, THAT THE WEST DID NOTHING TO PREVENT THE SLAUGHTER OF JEWS IN GERMAN-OCCUPIED POLAND DURING WORLD WAR II DESPITE FULL KNOWLEDGE OF THEIR PLIGHT. ONLY "THE VICTORIOUS OFFENSIVE OF THE RED ARMY" SAVED THE LIVES OF THOUSANDS. GOLDMANN EXPRESSED GRATITUDE TO THE POLISH AUTHORITIES FOR MOUNTING THE EXHIBITION AND EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF AUSCHWITZ IN JEWISH MARTYROLOGY. GRAJEK "STRESSED THE NEED TO OPPOSE NEO-NAZI ATTEMPTS TO BRING BACK TO LIFE THE FASCIST AND ANTI-SEMITIC HYDRA".

3. AN EMBASSY OFFICER SPOKE WITH GOLDMANN IN WARSAW AFTER THE OPENING. GOLDMANN SAID HE IS SATISFIED WITH THE EXHIBITION ALTHOUGH IT IS STILL ONLY 70 PERCENT COMPLETE. THE EXHIBIT, HE SAID, PROVIDES A THOROUGHLY DOCUMENTED PICTURE OF THE HARDSHIPS ENDURED BY THE JEWS IN THE NAZI PERIOD.

4. COMMENT: THE OPENING OF THE EXHIBITION, THE FIRST AT AUSCHWITZ, GOLDMANN SAID, DEVOTED TO A PEOPLE RATHER THAN TO A NATION, IS THE CULMINATION OF YEARS OF EFFORT BY JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS TO PROD THE POLISH GOVERNMENT TO PROVIDE A LASTING MONUMENT TO THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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JEWS WHO WERE THE PRINCIPAL VICTIMS OF CONCENTRATION CAMP ATROCITIES. THE OPENING INAUGURATED THE POLISH COMMEMORATION OF THE 1943 WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING, AN EVENT WHICH HAS RECEIVED CONSIDERABLE PRESS ATTENTION IN THE PAST FEW WEEKS. LAST YEAR ONLY THREE OR FOUR WREATHS WERE LAIN AT THE GHETTO MONUMENT. THE NUMBER OF WREATHS PLACED AT THE MEMORIAL TO THE HEROES OF THE GHETTO UPRISING INCREASED TENFOLD THIS YEAR. AS HAS BEEN THE CUSTOM IN THE PAST, THE AMBASSADOR LAID A WREATH ON BEHALF OF THE EMBASSY.
SCHAUFLE

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